Lead Acid Batteries

1694. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government propose to make it mandatory for lead-acid battery manufacturers to take back as many batteries as they sell;

(b) if so, when this order would be made effective; and

(c) what is its likely impact on environment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Environment and Forests is in the process finalising a preliminary notification calling for objections/suggestions within sixty days of its publication in the gazette on the management and handling of used Lead Acid Batteries in the country. As per the proposed preliminary notification all manufactures, importers, re-conditioners, assemblers and dealers shall collect used batteries *in lieu of* new batteries sold. Cent percent collection is proposed to be achieved in a phased manner. To ensure environment friendly re-processing collected batteries are required to be sold only to such re-cyclers who are registered with the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Consumers are required to return used batteries only to the authorised agents. After considering objections/suggestions received within the stipulated period, the notification will be finalized.

Use of CNG in Public transport buses

1695. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the use of compressed natural gas in the public transport buses will contribute to global warming, as some experts say;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what would be the pros and cons of the use of the compressed natural gas as against the environmental pollution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) Compressed Natural Gas is predominantly methane (CH_4) and it has global warming potential.

However, after combustion in the engine, methane is converted to other compounds. There is no direct study available *vis-a-vis* use of Compressed Natural Gas as automotive fuel and related global warming.

Wet-land development Project of Tripura

1696. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has sanctioned Rs. 6.35 crores wet land development project-correction, conservation and management of Rudrasagar in Tripura;

(b) if so, whether any fund has been released so far; and

(c) if not, by when the fund would be released to Tripura?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) A conservation and management plan of Rudrasagar Wetland in Tripura at an estimated cost of Rs. 6.35 crore has been received from the Government of Tripura.

(b) and (c) An amount of Rs. 20 lakhs has been released so far.

Environment threat to Himalayas

1697. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Himalayas are under serious threat today and their glaciers are receding;

(b) if so, what is the status of environment in the Himalayas and what steps Government have taken in this regard; and

(c) whether Government visualize any real threat in distant future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Himalayas are the youngest mountain chain in the world and are yet to stabilise from the point of view of geomorphology and geology. Geological instability compounded with a complex set of biotic and abiotic factors, e.g., population pressure, deforestation, land slides, earthquakes, soil erosion, floods, water scarcity, outward migration of people and poverty have resulted in the fragility of the Himalayan ecosystem. Some studies have indicated that the glaciers in the Himalayan region are showing signs of receding.